

Study Focus

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), in partnership with Custer and Rosebud Counties, conducted a Corridor Planning Study of Secondary Route 332 (S-332) from approximately reference post (RP) 0.00 (MT-59 intersection) extending 50.4 miles southwest to approximately RP 50.4 (S-447 intersection).

S-332 is functionally classified as a rural major collector on the Secondary Highway System. S-332 serves as a north-south corridor between Miles City and Ashland that roughly parallels the Tongue River, passing through rolling terrain that consists of farm and ranch land.

This corridor was initially constructed as a gravel road in the 1930's and placed on Montana's Secondary Highway System in 1945. The road was reconstructed to an all-weather gravel surface by the county in the 1950's and in the 1990's, the first 17.7 miles (RP's 0.0 to 17.7) was reconstructed to pavement. The paved portion is maintained by MDT while the gravel section is maintained by the counties.

The 2011 Legislature appropriated funds to "... *survey and provide design and preliminary engineering work to improve State Secondary 332.*" The corridor study report provides potential improvement options, cost estimates and possible funding scenarios to address identified areas of concern that arose from the Study.

For purposes of this Study, the study area boundary was limited to a one-half mile buffer on each side of the roadway centerline of S-332.

The purpose of the Study was to determine financially feasible improvement options to address safety and geometrical concerns within the transportation corridor based on needs presented by the community, the study partners, and resource agencies. The Study examined geometric characteristics, crash history, and existing and projected operational characteristics of the S-332 corridor. Existing and projected physical constraints, land uses, and environmental resources were also be analyzed.

The Study included a comprehensive package of short- and long-term recommendations intended to address the transportation needs of the highway over the planning horizon (year 2032), with particular attention given to the next 5 to 10 years. These recommendations will assist the study partners in targeting the most critical needs and allocating resources appropriately. The Study was completed in December 2012.

The study process followed the Montana Business Process to Link Planning Studies and NEPA/MEPA Reviews, which requires extensive community outreach and coordination with other partnering agencies.

Issues that were identified and reviewed included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Safety;
- Irrigation Facilities;
- Wildlife Habitat and Connectivity;
- Historic Resources and Cultural Landscape;
- Fisheries Habitat and Connectivity;
- Wetlands;
- Existing and Future Mining Activities; and
- Potential Tongue River Railroad.

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very long letter, and it contains a great deal of information about the state of the country at that time. It is a very important document, and it is one of the most interesting documents in the collection.